UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Special Representative for former Yugoslavia demands prompt cease-fire after outbreak of heavy fighting in Sarajevo; warns Bosnian parties not to underestimate gravity of situation.

+ General Assembly adopts resolution on organization of speakers list for Fiftieth Anniversary Commemorative Meeting; elects judges to International Tribunal for Rwanda.

+ Secretary-General meets with senior United Nations officials to review Guatemala peace process and activities of MINUGUA.

+ Secretary-General recommends Security Council extend MINURSO mandate for four months; says Western Sahara referendum could take place early next year if voter identification proceeds rapidly.

+ Antonio Pedauye of Spain appointed as Head of Mission of UNPROFOR; Henryk Sokalski of Poland to be Civilian Head of Mission of UNPREDEP; Khaled Yassir named as Deputy Special Representative for Angola.

+ Tajik Government and opposition extend current cease-fire agreement for three months.

+ WHO reports no new cases of Ebola haemorrhagic fever in Zaire since 21 May; puts total of deaths at 101.

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Heavy fighting broke out in Sarajevo again today, leading Special Representative Yasushi Akashi to demand a prompt cease-fire and full compliance with the February 1994 agreement on heavy weapons. He said the fighting violated the safe-area and exclusion-zone regimes and endangered the lives of innocent civilians and United Nations personnel. He noted that weapons had been removed from weapons collection points or, in some cases, fired from them.

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"This makes a series of extremely dangerous and volatile escalations that cannot be tolerated", Mr. Akashi said. He reminded the Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Serbs of the potentially serious consequences of non-compliance, saying the gravity of the situation should not be underestimated.

In another development, the Force Commander of the United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF), Lieutenant-General Bernard Janvier, today briefed the Security Council on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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The General Assembly this morning approved the organization of the list of speakers for its Special Commemorative Meeting on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, to be held from 22 to 24 October. It acted without a vote on a draft resolution submitted by the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary.

Heads of State will be accorded first priority, followed by vice-presidents, crown princes/princesses, heads of government, highest ranking officials of the Holy See and Switzerland as observer States and Palestine, in its capacity as observer, ministers, permanent representatives and other observers. The order of the list to choose meeting and speaker slots will be determined in a drawing of names by the Secretary-General or his representative on 7 June.

Also this morning, the Assembly elected three judges to the trial chambers of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Nevanethem Pillay (South Africa), Laity Kama (Senegal), and T.H. Khan (Bangladesh) each received the required absolute majority. Three seats remained to be filled.

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Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali today held a meeting to review progress in the Guatemala peace process and to discuss the activities of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA). The meeting was attended by Special Political Adviser Rosario Green, Special Envoy Gilberto Schlittler and MINUGUA Director Leonardo Franco, who is currently on mission in New York. The review was a follow-up to the Secretary-General's visit to Guatemala in April.

In the meeting, the Secretary-General reiterated his support for MINUGUA's activities in the verification of human rights and the strengthening of national institutions. He expressed his satisfaction at the progress being made in the talks between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), and his hope that an agreement would be reached shortly on socio-economic aspects and the agrarian situation.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali reiterated his willingness to assist the Guatemalans in their quest for peace. He expressed his appreciation for the support of the international community, particularly that of the Group of Friends of the Guatemala Peace Process (Colombia, Mexico, Norway, Spain, the United States of

America and Venezuela). He also expressed the hope that Member States would contribute generously to the Trust Fund for the Guatemala Peace Process.

The Secretary-General was scheduled to depart later in the day for Houston, Texas, to participate in that city's observation tomorrow of the Organization's fiftieth anniversary. He was also scheduled to address the Institute for International Education and the James Baker Institute on Foreign Policy, before returning to Headquarters on Friday.

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The Security Council should extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for four months, according to the Secretary-General. In a report dated 19 May, he said the referendum could take place early next year if the Mission were allowed to proceed rapidly with the identification of voters. While identification had proved to be a complex and sensitive process, many seemingly insurmountable barriers had been overcome and much had been achieved.

The Secretary-General called on the parties to cooperate with MINURSO so that the identification process could be concluded successfully. Meanwhile, progress must be achieved on other important aspects of the settlement plan. In early July, he would forward to the parties the final text of the code of conduct; in August, he would inform the Council of the progress made on the release of political prisoners; in September, he would make a ruling on the confinement of Frente POLISARIO prisoners. By that time, he should have received confirmation from the Government of Morocco on the arrangements for the reduction of its troops in the Territory.

Monitoring those benchmarks would enable the Security Council to assess the parties' willingness to implement the settlement plan, the Secretary-General continued. By the end of September, he would assess the progress achieved and make recommendations for the fulfilment of the United Nations mandate in Western Sahara. In a related development, a spokesman for the Organization today announced that a Council mission would depart for the Territory on 2 June.

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The Secretary-General has appointed Ambassador Antonio Pedauye of Spain as Head of Mission of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). Mr. Pedauye is currently Spain's Ambassador-at-large for the former Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, Henryk Sokalski of Poland has been appointed as Civilian Head of Mission of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. He is currently the Director and Coordinator for the International Year of the Family at the United Nations Office in Vienna.

In another appointment, the Secretary-General named Khaled Yassir as his Deputy Special Representative for Angola. Mr. Yassir has been Director of the Division for Audit and Management Review of the United Nations Development

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Programme (UNDP) since 1982. The three appointments announced today were at the level of Assistant Secretary-General.

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The Government of Tajikistan and the Tajik opposition have extended the current cease-fire agreement for three months through 26 August, a United Nations spokesman announced today. They agreed on the extension at a meeting in Afghanistan, before beginning the fourth round of inter-Tajik talks in Kazakhstan on Monday.

In a Presidential statement on Friday, the Security Council called on the Tajik parties to extend the cease-fire. It recalled that an extension was necessary for the continuation of United Nations efforts and maintenance of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT).

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There have been no new cases of Ebola haemorrhagic fever and no increase in the number of deaths in Zaire since 21 May, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). It said that one duplicated case had been discounted, giving a revised total of 136 cases and 101 deaths, and that the epidemic remained stable.

WHO reported that active surveillance in Kikwit might reveal a possible source of the epidemic. A previous chain of deaths within one household, which possibly began in December 1994, was now being linked with other cases of haemorrhagic disease and death similar to Ebola haemorrhagic fever.

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